



California Public Utilities Commission
505 Van Ness Ave., San Francisco

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MEDIA ADVISORY

Media Contact: Terrie Prosper, 415.703.1366, news@cpuc.ca.gov

**CPUC TO HOLD COMMUNICATIONS EN BANC TO DISCUSS THE
FUTURE OF CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNICATIONS GRID**

SAN FRANCISCO, May 8, 2019 - The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) is hosting an En Banc on the future of California's communications grid to address how the state's processes and regulations will need to evolve to stay relevant to Californians.

WHAT: CPUC Communications Division's En Banc: The Future of California's Communications Grid

WHEN: Monday, May 20, 2019, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

WHERE: Sacramento City Hall – Council Chambers, 915 I St., Sacramento, CA 95814; also available via webcast at http://adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc/en_banc/20190520/

BACKGROUND

The communications market is changing rapidly. What began as a statewide, copper-based telephone network of franchise monopoly local exchange companies has evolved into a diverse, multi-provider and multi-technology broadband network that relies on copper, fiber optic, wireless, and satellite infrastructure.

This En Banc is the first in a series of stakeholder engagement opportunities envisioned by the CPUC's Communications Division to address how the state's processes and regulations will need to evolve to stay relevant to Californians. The public is invited to this En Banc to hear from stakeholders in business, education, government and non-profit sectors examining the state's



communications grid, challenges, and future work relating to network resiliency, reliability, affordability, and consumer protection.

There will be an opportunity for public comments at the En Banc.

While a quorum of Commissioners and/or their staff may attend, no official action will be taken.

For more information, including a final agenda (draft agenda is below), please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov/CDenbanc.

If specialized accommodations are needed to attend, such as non-English language interpreters, please contact the CPUC's Public Advisor's Office at public.advisor@cpuc.ca.gov or toll free at 866-849-8390 at least three business days in advance of the En Banc.

The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians' access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. For more information on the CPUC, please visit www.cpuc.ca.gov.

###

**California Public Utilities Commission
Communications Division En Banc
The Future of California's Communications Grid**

May 20, 2019, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

**Sacramento City Hall, Council Chambers
915 I St., Sacramento**

**Webcast: http://adminmonitor.com/ca/cpuc/en_banc/20190520/
More information: www.cpuc.ca.gov/CDenbanc**

California's Communications Grid

Recent wildfires have underscored the critical role the communications grid plays in warning the public, alerting and allowing first responders to communicate with each other, and connecting



wildfire victims to emergency services and loved ones. The communications grid, like power and water, is critical infrastructure, yet the state still relies on a patchwork of statutes and rules from the previous decade often hinder the state's ability to ensure access to safe, reliable, and affordable services.

The communications market is changing rapidly. What began as a statewide, copper-based telephone network of franchise monopoly local exchange companies has evolved into a diverse, multi-provider and multi-technology broadband network that relies on copper, fiber optic, wireless, and satellite infrastructure. The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Communications Division is holding a workshop to hear from a wide range of stakeholders to better understand the state's communications needs and challenges in the coming years. This workshop is the first in a series of stakeholder engagement opportunities to address how the current processes and regulations will need to evolve to stay relevant to Californians.

Morning Session

Introductory Remarks from Commissioners (10-10:30 a.m.)

Affordability and Access (10:35-11:30 a.m.)

The Affordability and Access panel will focus on the communications needs of low income and disabled populations in the coming years. Closing the broadband adoption gap continues to be a challenge. Questions addressed include: What issues may arise as network speeds increase and devices proliferate, and how will communications services continue to be affordable?

Emergency Preparedness and Response (11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.)

The Emergency Preparedness and Response panel will focus on the demand drivers and challenges for emergency communications within the state in the coming years. The CPUC has open proceedings on utility Public Safety Power Shut-Offs (PSPS) and protections for wildfire victims – both of which affect communications services and providers. In addition, the Legislature is considering several bills dealing with 9-1-1 surcharges, wireless alerts, traffic throttling, and Voice over Internet Protocol. Given that backdrop, how will the needs of first responders and victims of natural disasters likely evolve over time?

Break for Lunch (12:30-1:30 p.m.)

Afternoon Session

Libraries and Education (1:30-2:25 p.m.)

High-speed communications networks, like the California Research and Education Network (CalREN), enable libraries and schools to go beyond book-based learning by offering multimedia resources and training for people of all ages. Examples include software coding, 3D printing, and device lending. Currently, 70 percent of the State's 1,132 main and branch libraries are now connected or will connect to CalREN. The latest data from K12 High Speed Network show that 80 percent of California's K-12 schools are connected to CalREN, with more than half connected to 1 Gigabits per second or higher. The Libraries and Education panel will focus on the demands libraries and schools will put on the communications grid as more and more activity occurs on the Internet. What challenges do libraries and schools face in the coming years with regards to the communications grid?

Economic Growth and Prosperity (2:30-3:25 p.m.)

Businesses large and small – from the family farm to the multi-national corporation – require Internet connectivity to function, but the lack of broadband options in agricultural and rural areas prevents many businesses outside California's major cities from evolving to embrace 21st century business models. What are the challenges to economic growth and prosperity created by the lack of access to the communications grid?



Cybersecurity and Communications (3:30-4:25 p.m.)

Banking transactions, online purchases, reservations, and email are all encrypted. According to Network World, modern public-key encryption is sufficient for enterprise requirements, but experts believe the status quo will soon be threatened by quantum computing. This is just one example of how cybersecurity and encryption will continue to be critical areas in the coming years, but how will they likely to evolve? The Cybersecurity and Communications panel will discuss the challenges in the coming 5-10 years.

Closing Comments (4:30-4:45 p.m.)

NOTE: *Although a quorum of Commissioners, their Advisors, or other decision-makers may be present, no action will be taken at this event. This En Banc is independent of any CPUC proceeding, and panelists are forbidden from making ex parte comments related to open proceedings during their presentations or discussions.*

